



## Georgia Safe Routes to School Resource Center Monthly Progress Report January 2014

### Highlights

During January, five new schools partnered with the Resource Center; the attached list provides the names of our 415 Partner Schools. Also during January, one organization joined the Resource Center as a Friend. Outreach staff gave three presentations and held 103 meetings with stakeholders and schools. This month, the team began providing assistance for two School Travel Plans by meeting with stakeholders, collecting data, and coordinating presentations. Additionally, Georgia Walk to School Day (gWalk) registration was opened on the Resource Center website. Finally, the Saris Poster Contest was announced in Georgia. The Resource Center is serving as the contest's Georgia coordinator.

### Outreach Summaries

#### Metro Atlanta Territory - Nichole Hollis, School Outreach Coordinator

Nichole maintains 128 Partners in the Metro Atlanta Territory. **West Manor Elementary School** (Atlanta Public Schools) was added as a school Partner on January 21<sup>st</sup>, and the **U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps** was added as a Friend on January 14<sup>th</sup>.

Nichole coordinated Travel Plan initiatives for **Springdale Park Elementary School** and **Inman Middle School**. On January 27<sup>th</sup>, Springdale Park Elementary School held its first travel plan meeting including a diverse group of stakeholders. Georgia Department of Transportation representatives, city planners, Atlanta Public School system representatives, parents, and neighborhood associations were in attendance. Nichole facilitated the meeting and gave an overview about Safe Routes to School and the benefits of a travel plan. During the meeting stakeholders discussed barriers, solutions, visions, and discussion topics for future meetings. Nichole also worked **with Safe Kids Georgia** to identify a potential school in City of Atlanta to award their **Safe Kids Zone Grant**. Inman Middle School was awarded and will be discussing travel plan initiatives with a potential group of taskforce members on **February 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>**. Safe Kids Georgia and Safe Routes to school will be collaborating efforts by creating a mini-travel plan for Inman Middle School that will help to improve infrastructure needs.

Nichole held a presentation at **Kelley Lake Elementary School** (DeKalb County Schools) at their monthly staff meeting. She discussed the benefits of Safe Routes to School from a community perspective. **The DeKalb County Board of Health** was also present to support the program and explain their role in helping with technical assistance.

Nichole held a meeting with the **Atlanta Bicycle Coalition** which is also a friend of the resource center. Program Manager, **Leslie Caceda**, explained the **Earn-a-Bike program** and is interested in collaborating efforts to give away **86 bikes** in the spring. The program gives bikes to students in underserved

communities and holds two day instructor-led bike safety classes at schools. The bikes will include helmets and bells for students. Nichole will be working with the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition to identify schools in Metro Atlanta that would be eligible for the program.

In February, Nichole plans to continue travel plan initiatives for Springdale Park Elementary and Inman Middle School. She will also be continuing efforts to encourage schools to participate in Georgia Walk to School Day.



*A group of students at **Morningside Elementary** pose with their Walking Wednesday Golden Shoe Award.*

### **North Georgia Territory - Alicia Hatcher, Senior School Outreach Coordinator**

Alicia provides support to 102 Partners throughout North Georgia. She promoted gWalk, the Saris contest, and spring events.

Alicia attended the monthly **Safe Kids Douglas County** meeting on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. **Safe Kids Douglas County** is a Friend of the Resource Center; the coalition is currently seeking a new coordinator and is being run by **Safe Kids Cobb County** in the interim. The coalition would like to extend their reach to more schools and will partner with Alicia to include SRTS and sign on more Partners.

Safe Kids Douglas County is planning to partner with **Chapel Hill Elementary School** in Douglasville for Georgia Walk to School Day. Chapel Hill Elementary is an infrastructure winner and now has a sidewalk connecting a nearby neighborhood to the school. Safe Kids would like to volunteer to help walk students to school and also teach pedestrian safety lessons. They are awaiting final approval from the principal to implement this community collaboration opportunity.

Alicia and Nichole attended the **Voices for Georgia's Children Day** at the Georgia Capitol building on January 23<sup>rd</sup> after being invited by Doug Joiner of the **Safe Routes to School National Partnership**. Voices for Georgia's Children is a nonprofit organization that envisions a Georgia where children are safe, healthy, educated, and connected to their family and community. They brought together groups with similar missions for a day of awareness and networking at the Capitol. Alicia and Nichole were able to connect with other groups and spread the message of SRTS.

### **East Central Territory - Taki Gartrell Smith, School Outreach Coordinator**

Taki maintains 84 Partners in the East Central Territory. Recently, Taki signed on **Columbia Middle School** in Columbia County as a new School Partner. Three schools in the East Central Territory have opted not to continue participating in the SRTS Partner Program due to limited involvement from parents, administrative turnover since originally partnering, or having partnered because of infrastructure call in 2010. During the month of January, Taki focused on finalizing and completing Student Travel Tally coversheets for the SRTS National Center, composing the SRTS Wayfinding January Newsletter edition and promoting Georgia Walk to School Day (gWalk) and the Saris Bicycle Poster Contest.

Taki traveled to Richmond, Toombs, and Newton Counties for meetings with Friends and Partners of the Resource Center, while continuing to distribute the 2014-2015 SRTS Event Calendar posters. In Columbia County, Taki met with Julie Miller, CEO for **Columbia County Community Connections/Healthy Connections**, a potential Friend of the Resource Center in regards to learning more about the operation of the non-profit organization. Taki was able to provide information on how the Resource Center can network and possibly collaborate with the organization in the future.

During January, Taki was featured on 96.3 KISS FM and Power 107.7 FM radio stations in Augusta. She was invited to be a guest on the radio by the **Augusta Partnership for Children Inc.**, a Friend of the Resource Center during their weekly segment entitled, The Augusta in Review Show. The show is aired weekly and features a non-profit or community organization that collaborates with the Augusta Partnership for Children. During the segment, Taki was able to provide the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) listeners with information about the SRTS program, community involvement, and promote Georgia Walk to School Day in March.

On January 31<sup>st</sup>, Taki attended a Family Science Night/Health and Awareness Fair hosted by the PTO Committee in Columbia County at **River Ridge Elementary School**, a Partner with the Resource Center. Taki tabled the event and provided informative resources about the SRTS Program and promoted Georgia Walk to School Day. Taki also informed the parents about the Resource Center Facebook page, and she distributed handouts and magnets to the parents and stickers and pencils to the students.

In January, Taki met with Patti Sistrunk and Chelsea Carter for a collaborative meeting in Vidalia to discuss SRTS and upcoming events. During February, Taki will continue to focus on promoting Georgia Walk to School Day by providing helpful resources to active school Partners as well as reaching out to inactive school Partners.

### **Southwest Territory - Chelsea Carter, School Outreach Coordinator**

Chelsea dedicated the month of January to promoting gWalk and the Saris poster contest. In addition, she made contact with schools that have never had a Safe Routes program or significant knowledge of Safe Routes to School. In efforts to get **Pinevale Elementary School's** parents more aware of Safe Routes to School, Chelsea passed out information about the program as well as Pinevale's Georgia Walk to School Event planned for March. Due to certain circumstances (weather and absent champions), the event did not yield the desired results. Chelsea hopes to hold another event later in the year at Pinevale.

Chelsea has been aiming to increase the schools active with Safe Routes in Mitchell County. There is one school in the county that partnered with our program, **North Mitchell County Elementary**. This school is excited about Georgia Walk to School and the Saris poster contest. Organizers plan to have a week-long event for Georgia Walk to School Day and also plan to have the students take it home with them- having parents sign off on a form if they walk with their child outside of school hours.

Chelsea plans to have meetings and presentation soon in Echols County with Principals and the Superintendent. This county does not have SRTS but has been contacted and was interested. Chelsea plans to sign Echols County Elementary/Middle School up for Georgia Walk to School Day. In Lanier County there are three relatively inactive school Partners. Chelsea met with the Board of Education as well as **Lanier County Primary, Elementary, and Middle Schools** and will be working more closely with the Champions. Chelsea has also been working with S.L. Mason Elementary School in Lowndes County in efforts to make the school a partner and register an event for Georgia Walk to School Day.

The success story of the month was Thomas County. Chelsea visited the Thomasville city school district schools over the past three months and had no response. This month she reached out to the county schools: **Hand-in-Hand Primary School, Garrison-Pilcher Elementary School, and Cross Creek Elementary School**. These schools

were warm and welcoming to the program and plan to have events for Georgia Walk to School Day. Cross Creek plans to embrace and use some of the NHTSA Pedestrian Education. These three new partners make Chelsea's Partner list total 63. Chelsea met with the city school, Jerger Elementary, and expects that the school may become a Partner soon as well.

In the next month Chelsea will continue to promote program and events while meeting with more prospective schools including Whitesburg Elementary in Carroll County. Coach Barrett from Whitesburg expressed excitement about SRTS and plans to speak with the principal about partnership. Chelsea hopes to sign on the long-time prospect, Carrollton Central Elementary. This school has been interested in SRTS for some time and plans on having a Georgia Walk to School Event. Also, in Coweta County, Ellis Arnall Middle School is another prospective school Chelsea found while visiting White Oak Elementary. After the introductory drop in meeting in December, she has been able to speak with an Assistant Principal and scheduled a meeting for the first week in February. While visiting these schools, Chelsea will be meeting for the first time with **Carroll County's Safe Kids** leader Stephen Johnston in hopes of seeing how we can work together to benefit the surrounding schools.

### **Coastal Georgia Territory - Patti Sistrunk, Project Manager**

Maintaining an active outreach territory herself, Patti supports relationships with 39 Partners in Coastal Georgia.

Patti presented at the January PTA meeting of **Charles Ellis Montessori Academy (CEMA)**, in Chatham County. The school was selected for Travel Plan assistance. At the meeting on January 16<sup>th</sup>, Patti provided parents, staff, and community stakeholders with basic SRTS information and led the team through a discussion about barriers and potential strategies for improving biking and walking to and from Charles Ellis. The team will meet again in February for a walk audit, dismissal observation, and further discussion. A planning team from Toole Design will come to support the travel planning process and conduct field work and facilitate discussions about SRTS at CEMA.

The City of Savannah Traffic Engineering office met with Patti to discuss CEMA's plan as well as SRTS challenges and solutions throughout the city. Michele Strickland from the city provided information about a few schools that could use the Resource Center's services including Bartow Elementary and **Godley Station School**.

### **Marketing**

The website was updated with new graphics. Carol Kachadoorian, Marketing Manager, is working with a contract web developer and designer. Updates include

- gWalk information, including announcement of open registration
- Updated list of registered events (about 2 to 3 times per week)
- New graphics (images) at top and bottom of website

The Resource Center issued a January Newsletter mid-month. The Wayfinding newsletter was drafted by Taki and edited by Carol and Patti. It included information about gWalk registration,

Incentives were distributed to registered partners for gWalk events. Glow in the dark wristbands and updated pedestrian safety bookmarks will be distributed leading up to gWalk events in March.

### Thirty-day “Look Ahead” Period

In February, the Resource Center staff will coordinate and hold Travel Plan Assistance meetings at Springdale Park Elementary School and Charles Ellis Montessori Academy. Meetings will include a walk audit, dismissal observation, and planning discussions.

The Resource Center team will meet in February for a quarterly team meeting and training. The team will also meet with Emmanuella Myrthil, GDOT Project Manager, to discuss project progress, status, and plans. Patti and Thom Cerny from URS will meet with Emmanuella to discuss project progress and Year 2 scope and planning. Year 2 begins in mid-June.

A February Newsletter will go out and will focus on promoting Georgia Walk to School Day. Incentives will be delivered, and the Resource Center team will encourage school and community participation via meetings and communication.